

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is a way to resolve old, painful, stored memories in our emotional side of the brain—the right side. Many people know the truth, but are still triggered by the emotional pain. It allows for the truth to be triggered instead of old, painful reactions.

The theory is that old memories become locked in our brain because of an emotional chemical wash during highly charged memories. They then do not allow for the right side of our brain to help work through the memory. This is why people can know the truth but still get triggered by the old memories.

EMDR uses the theory of sleep. REM sleep is rapid eye movement and it is critical to normal functioning. REM sleep is also where our body tries to work out traumatic issues or memories that can result in nightmares. The problem is that sleep is an unconscious state. EMDR allows one to process the painful memories during conscious wake times and then allow the neurotransmitters that carry information from the left (cognitive) side of the brain to the right (emotional) side of the brain. This happens through rapid tracking of eyes, hand taps, knee taps, or vocal sounds in each ear. This process allows people to resolve the emotional pain and allow the truth to be the replacement for the traumatic memories. EMDR works by stimulating right and left brain activity quickly, the same as the quick processing that happens during sleep. Most people can work through traumatic memories within three to six 90-minute sessions.